

SIERRA COUNTY
MEND Program (\$472,443 grant)

The Multiple Agency Effort and Needs-Based Diversion (MEND) project addresses serious gaps in the availability of in-county services for mentally ill offenders in Sierra County, which does not have a juvenile detention facility, and lacks available slots in foster homes, group homes and other residential treatment services.

Through the MEND program, the county is providing mental health screening services for all youth who become involved with the juvenile justice system and significantly expanding the availability of case management and community-based services for offenders with mental illness.

When the District Attorney files a petition in juvenile court, the youth and family meet with the project's Probation Officer, who conducts an intake interview that includes a mental health screening using the evidence-based Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument, Version Two (MAYSI-2) and a risk assessment using the Washington State Juvenile Court Pre-Screen Assessment. Youth identified as having mental health issues are referred to a licensed clinician for a full assessment.

Youth accepted into the MEND program receive case management and an array of services anchored in the wraparound model, which is a strengths-based and family focused approach to providing comprehensive community-based services to youth with complex needs – e.g., mental health treatment, pharmacological interventions, family therapy and parent training, and educational services.

The county anticipates that approximately 36 youth will undergo mental health screening and that up to 27 of these youth will be referred to the MEND program.

Project Director: Carol Roberts, Director, Sierra County Human Services
(530) 993-6701; croberts@sierracounty.ws